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FACTSHEET

Regulatory Enforcement and Animal Care

The mission of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is to provide leadership in ensuring the health and care of animals and plants, thereby improving agricultural productivity and competitiveness and contributing to the national economy and the public health. The 1988 reorganization of APHIS created two units that run in tandem with one another—Regulatory Enforcement and Animal Care (REAC). Each unit supports the APHIS mission and cooperates with other APHIS programs.

The Regulatory Enforcement component of REAC performs the investigative and enforcement functions for all APHIS programs, including Animal Care. Animal Care is responsible for implementing the animal welfare program and ensuring compliance with the Animal Welfare and Horse Protection Acts. The two programs operate through four sector offices.

Animal Care

Animal Care is composed of field and staff veterinary medical officers and animal care inspectors. Animal Care's mission is to ensure compliance with the Animal Welfare Act, the Horse Protection Act, and their accompanying regulations and standards governing the humane care and use of covered species of animals. The Animal Welfare Act protects from inhumane treatment and neglect certain warm-blooded animals raised for commercial sale, used in research, transported commercially, or exhibited to the public and requires that these animals be provided at least the minimum standards of care and treatment required by the regulations. The Horse Protection Act prohibits horses subjected to *soring*—a painful practice used to accentuate a horse's gait—from participating in exhibitions, sales, shows, or auctions.

Animal Care accomplishes its mission through:

- Educating the industry and the public about the Animal Welfare Act, the Horse Protection Act, and the governing standards and regulations;
- Performing compliance inspections of all licensed or registered animal dealers, exhibitors, research facilities, and intransit carriers;

- Liaison and cooperation with other Federal, State, and foreign agencies; industry groups; and any other interested parties; and
- Development of regulatory proposals and policy under the Animal Welfare and Horse Protection Acts.

Regulatory Enforcement

Regulatory Enforcement's staff of field investigators and staff specialists helps APHIS accomplish its mission. Regulatory Enforcement's mission is to provide leadership, direction, and support for investigative and enforcement activities throughout APHIS. Regulatory Enforcement accomplishes its mission through investigating violations of laws, standards, and regulations for the following APHIS units: Animal Care; Veterinary Services; Plant Protection and Quarantine; and Biotechnology, Biologics, and Environmental Protection.

Each APHIS unit has its own protection mission:

- As described above, Animal Care protects animals covered under the Animal Welfare and Horse Protection Acts.
- Veterinary Services protects the health of the Nation's livestock and poultry through disease eradication and exclusion activities.
- Plant Protection and Quarantine protects the Nation's agricultural resources from the national and international spread of plant pests and diseases.
- Biotechnology, Biologics, and Environmental Protection protects the environment by regulating the movement and release of genetically engineered organisms and veterinary biological products.

Regulatory Enforcement helps to enforce and maintain compliance with APHIS regulations by:

- Conducting investigations of alleged violations of laws and regulations.
- Reviewing, evaluating, and processing alleged violation cases in close cooperation with USDA's Office of the General Counsel and APHIS program officials.

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- Maintaining complete case files on alleged violators and accurately tracking investigations and program violations with the APHIS Compliance Investigation Tracking System data base.
- Developing and maintaining a resource library on enforcement issues, disseminating information, and providing training for APHIS programs.
- Preparing and issuing warning letters and recommending consistent penalties and collection of fines regarding administrative and/or criminal actions.
- Coordinating administrative hearings and the approval process for subpoenas.

For More Information

For more information about REAC activities at APHIS' headquarters or REAC sector offices, you may contact:

Deputy Administrator
USDA, APHIS, REAC
306-E Administration Building
Washington, DC 20250
Telephone: (202) 720-4295

Northeast Sector—Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia

The Regulatory Enforcement Staff in the Northeast also includes Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

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South Central Sector—Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas

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Southeast Sector—Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, U.S. Virgin Islands

The Animal Care Staff in the Southeast also includes Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

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Western Sector—Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming

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